

# **SPECIAL MEETING**

## **CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 19, 2007**

**HOPE HIGHLANDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**300 HOPE ROAD**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: 6:00 P.M.**

**PUBLIC SESSION: 7:00 P.M.**

### **MINUTES**

A special meeting of the Cranston School Committee was held on the evening of the above date at Hope Highlands Elementary School with the following members present: Mr. Archetto, Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lombardi, Mr. Stycos, Mr. Traficante, and Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway. Also present were Mr. Scherza, Mr. Nero, Mr. Votto, Mr. Balducci, Mrs. Lundsten, Mr. Laliberte, and Mr. Cascione.

The meeting was called to order at 6:11 p.m. It was moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that the members adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Laws 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel and PL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation (possible litigation).

Chairman Traficante reconvened the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

The roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance conducted.

## **I. Public Acknowledgements / Communications**

**There were no public acknowledgements or communications.**

## **II. Chairperson Communications**

**There were no Chairperson communications.**

## **III. Superintendent Communications**

**There were no Superintendent communications.**

## **IV. School Committee Member Communications**

**There were no School Committee member communications**

## **V. Public Hearing**

**a. Students (Agenda / Non-agenda Items)**

**b. Members of the Public (Agenda Matters Only)**

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**There were no students who wished to speak on an agenda or non-agenda item.**

**Frederick Lataille, 4 Doric Avenue, Custodian, Cranston Public Schools – Mr. Lataille stated that he is the parent of a student at Cranston High School East and Vice President of Local 153. He stated that he wished to speak as the Vice President of Local 153. They have been informed that five full-time jobs are being cut effective July 1, 2007. People think custodians make more money than they really do, although compared to other cities and towns in the state they don't. He listed some of the things that custodians do in Cranston for the money they make. They clean all of the buildings inside and out; maintain and landscape and do snow removal. They help trades people and contractors; provide safety for students and staff and are on call 24/7. The custodians clean and remove bio-hazards and big hazard waste throughout the school system. They help police and fire. As an example, when Cranston East had its bomb threats, the custodians went in and helped the police and fire departments open the doors and searched for the bombs as well. When they had the mercury spill, the custodians had to assist as well. Custodians were making sure that the health and safety of the students were again protected. They also respond to Joel Zisseron's calls for help anytime and for any reason such as break-ins, floods, etc. When it comes to saving the school department money, the custodians also remove and repair asbestos and lead paint. They have experience in contractor's work, painting schools, sanding and refinishing hardwood floors, and building walls.**

**All of these things are money saving factors to the school**

department. Many of these are above and beyond the call of duty in their jobs. If one were to look into what it costs to remove hazardous waste, it is a big expense. The custodians save the school department that kind of money. Cutting custodians is putting a lot of stress and a lot of strain on their people. An addition of approximately 40,000 square feet at Cranston High School East is being built, and there is no money in the budget for a custodian there.

Seven years ago five positions were cut, and again now in 2007 the committee wants to cut another five positions. The committee is putting so much stress and strain on the custodians, and it is unbelievable. It is really hurting them, and they have a lot of pride in this system by doing their job and keeping the buildings in great shape. Many parents, committee members, and administrators have come into the buildings and remarked that they are doing a great job; but here it is, the committee is making more cuts. The committee can't keep cutting the same department over and over again. It is going to affect the buildings.

John Carbone, President Local 153 – He indicated that Mr. Lataille very nicely stated the reasons for labor. Labor is what they are all about. More importantly, his personal issue is safety and security of the children and staff in the buildings. They all know the social climate across America. In Cranston, there are very secure buildings, and the first line of defense in the buildings is the custodians and the secretary. They know the people who come into the buildings and know the parents. They know when strangers are in the buildings,

and they know when to call. He doesn't want to see the same

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mistakes made across America in Cranston where the buildings are under staffed. They don't have the staff to keep these buildings secure or safe. It is a personal concern of his. He has had the pleasure of working for the City of Cranston and the school department for twenty-one years, and he has seen every building in the City. For the first time in the last two or three years, he has seen eighteen elementary buildings secured with either buzzers, monitors, or not being allowed to get in the door without security. They know the important issues. Systems across America are down sizing with staff and personnel. Staff and personnel don't allow a building with 600 people in it to be very secure. He asked the School Committee to think about the safety and the security. Please don't cut any positions.

Donna Vasconcellos, 766 Laten Knight Road – She stated that she sent an e-mail to each of the School Committee members today. She wasn't sure if they all received it. She read the following e-mail into the record: Given the monumental task before you this evening of cutting millions of dollars from 2007-'08 school budget, it is my sincere hope that you focus on eliminating or reducing those programs that least impact students' education. Cranston Public Schools is in the "business" of education and "educating children"

should be their primary focus. As much as we all realize the value of extracurricular activities and program to students' education, we must not sacrifice the quality of the basic education that we provide to students at the expense of supporting those activities.

Hence, may I suggest that you first consider eliminating the middle school sports program. The magnitude of our budget shortfalls has forced us into a position of eliminating teaching positions, thus increasing classroom sizes. I believe that it is inappropriate to fund a middle school sports program at the expense of higher classroom sizes. The community offers various programs for those students interested in sports and their needs can be served if there is no middle school sports program in the Cranston Public Schools. I realize that eliminating middle school sports is a political hot button but if the Mayor and City Council think that middle school sports are that important, let them appropriate additional funds for that program.

Next, may I suggest significantly increasing the tuition for summer school classes, especially for out-of-district students. Out-of-district students take summer school classes in Cranston because their school districts do not provide them. Cranston does not have the resources to subsidize the education of out-of-district students. Also, increasing the tuition of summer school classes will provide a financial incentive to students to do well in their classes during the school year to avoid the prohibitive costs of summer school.

**Lastly, may I suggest reducing the funding that we provide to all high school extracurricular activities – sports, music and arts, and academic. Having one daughter who graduated from the Cranston Public Schools and another daughter at**

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**Cranston West, I fully realize the importance of providing extracurricular activities for high school students. However, funding those activities should not be at the expense of providing a quality basic education. Parents who have a child with special talents have supported their child's activities before he/she reached high school and will continue to find the resources to do so if it is in the best interest of their child. Parents expect the Cranston Public Schools to provide a quality education and should not have to subsidize their child's basic education. Involvement in extracurricular activities will help a high school student gain acceptance into college. But only by receiving a quality academic education will a student be able to achieve success in a college environment. Therefore, we must keep perspective of the importance of high school extracurricular activities and its relation to the student's overall education and fund extracurricular activities appropriately.**

**Thank you for your attention. I hope that you consider my comments when you are deciding on budget amendments.**

## **VI. Consent Calendar / Consent Agenda**

**There were no items under the consent agenda.**

## **VII. Action Calendar / Action Agenda**

### **ADMINISTRATION**

#### **BUSINESS**

**NO. 07-7-1 - RESOLVED, that the final budget for the 2007-2008 school year be approved as submitted.**

**Mr. Traficante stated for clarification that the budget amount is \$126,395,975. He stated that the budget that was adopted by the Cranston School Committee was \$129,865,082, a gap of roughly \$3.4 million which they had to cut from the appropriation.**

**Moved by Mr. Lombardi and seconded by Mrs. Greifer that this Resolution be adopted.**

**Mr. Stycos stated that he would be making an amendment with regard to the budget revisions. He had made a comment at the meeting on June 18th.**



**Mr. Stycos moved to add language to the budget that reads: “Once the school year begins, the School Committee shall revise this budget for the first time in April 2008.**

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**The administration shall retain the right to bring emergency financial problems to the School Committee when it deems necessary.”**

**Mr. Stycos commented that this is to mirror what the City Council does and the State Legislature. Once a year in April the committee can see where they are with the different accounts, and they will be able to say they over spent one account and under spent another account. The committee will be able to see and to compare projected actuals versus budgeted. They can learn from their mistakes in the past. Now the committee does four or five revisions, and millions of dollars are moved around each time. It is very confusing, and speaking for himself, he doesn’t know what policy changes are being made inside those millions. This is not a new thing; it is something other governmental bodies have dealt with.**

**Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway seconded the motion.**

**Mr. Archetto asked Mr. Stycos if he had copies of his amendments for the School Committee members. Mr. Stycos stated that he had a few**

copies of his amendments. Mr. Archetto requested that Mr. Stycos provide copies of his amendments for the committee. Mr. Archetto asked that if this amendment passes would it hamper Mr. Balducci's job as far as boxing him in in any way to perform his duties. Mr. Balducci stated that the district is better off doing three to four revisions a year because they are able to review the accounts more times than just looking at them once a year. One of the main reasons they do the first revision which comes before this body in November is realigning the salary accounts because of the teacher jamboree. If they don't do that and only worry about the budget next April, when he gives the committee this budget document in January, all of the payroll documents for 07-08 will be all over the place. When one is looking from a budget-to-budget standpoint and looking at 08-09 budget figures, it won't make any sense because next year's budget wasn't adjusted to follow the teacher movement after the teacher jamboree. Administration will be asked numerous questions why it doesn't make sense and why a specific account is going up only a certain percent. During the last budget session, Mr. Archetto asked questions of this nature last April, and he told Mr. Archetto that those accounts had not been adjusted yet. The revision is done in March because the district is just coming out of the winter season, and it gives the committee an opportunity to look at all of the utilities. He did agree with Mr. Stycos that millions of dollars are transferred to and from accounts, but the bottom line is minor. This is a \$126 million to \$129 million budget, and that is going to happen. Mr. Archetto commented that the budget is so much in flux during the

year with so many changes that it is to the committee's advantage to do four budget revisions rather than one. Mr. Balducci stated that this is his opinion as the Chief Financial Officer.

Mr. Stycos commented that there are two factors, one is the appropriation of money, and the other is the use of a budget as a tool. He would agree with Mr. Balducci that it

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makes sense in September or whenever he starts the budget process to make adjustments on paper to what his best guess is on what things are going to cost in the ongoing year. Then he would come to the committee with a budget based on that because the committee wants a new budget based on the best information they have. This doesn't prevent that. All this says is that once a year the committee is going to get a whole summary of the changes and be able to look at them and make actual dollar transfers once. If Mr. Balducci wants to come to the committee and show what was passed for a budget in the current year and indicate here's what it is looking like. He could give them a print out, and that is Mr. Balducci's job to indicate those things that have changed where it will effect the committee's budgeting in the future. The actual movement of the money from account to account should be done once a year. The committee moves money into one special education account and out of another special education account. Next month that is reversed, and the

following month the committee goes back. At the end of the year, Mr. Balducci knows what happened, but he doesn't think any of the School Committee members know what happened that they were over or under special education projections. Mr. Balducci could still have the manipulative tools to make good projections with this.

Mrs. Greifer stated that she preferred to rely on more information than less even though it is difficult for her to wade through some of this, and she usually has to rely on Mr. Balducci for many explanations. If, in the future, the district had a much less capable financial officer, she doesn't want to wait until April to see a trend on something when it is almost too late to do something about it in the fiscal year. She likes getting an opportunity throughout the year to look at the budget.

Her constituents would expect her to keep as close an eye on the finances as she is capable of doing.

Mr. Lombardi asked Mr. Stycos to repeat his motion because he didn't have the benefit of a hard copy in front of him. He understands that there is a one-time only on all facets of the budget.

Mr. Stycos repeated his motion as follows: "Once the school year begins, the School Committee shall revise this budget for the first time in April 2008. The administration shall retain the right to bring emergency financial problems to the School Committee when it deems necessary."

**Mr. Stycos commented that he is perfectly open to changing the amendment, but the administration under this motion can make as many tinkering with the budget as it wants to. It could put together all kinds of scenarios, but the committee could get as many updates on it as feasible; but the actual revision would be done once.**

**Mr. Traficante commented that what Mr. Stycos was proposing basically emulates what the Charter says for the City of Cranston municipal government that they can only transfer funds in the last quarter.**

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**Mr. Lombardi stated that he would not have an objection if it mirrors what is happening in the legislative end at the Council level. When referring to a revised budget, it seems that it can be touched only once which is April. The words as written seem to suggest that Mr. Balducci's hands are tied and it can be done only once in April.**

**Mr. Balducci remarked that when this document is prepared for 08-09, the column for 07-08 will still be the first budget that was adopted by this committee now because he cannot change that budget until it is revised and actually approved by the committee which won't be until April. When Mr. Stycos states that he can create a document, that is fine; but the official document that will be voted upon by this body that column will be the first adopted by the body, and it won't be**

changed along the way. The way it is currently done is through the budget revision process.

Mr. Traficante stated that in municipal government they are allowed to transfer funds within a department. As an example, with special education they would be allowed to transfer funds within that particular category. What they cannot do is transfer funds from the fire department to the police department; that could occur only during the last quarter. Mr. Stycos is stating that the committee could transfer funds on an emergency basis when Mr. Balducci brings it to their attention; however, that is when Mr. Stycos is proposing that the transfer of funds is indicated to the committee in terms of the major accounts.

Mr. Balducci asked how they would decide how the major accounts would be grouped together. He asked if they would be grouped as salary, fringe benefits, and if they would be grouped by school. He asked where do they begin.

Mr. Traficante remarked that it is a lot more difficult task than the city side. It is very clear on the city side. Mr. Balducci added that the city is more departmentalized. He further commented that if this amendment is passed, he cited the example that for the column for 06-07, if he is allowed to change that fiscal column in April of this year that just passed, when one would look to see how an account trended from one year to the next, it is not going to make sense

because of the constant movement of personnel. If someone does a percent or a dollar analysis, it is not going to make sense. Mr. Stycos indicated that Mr. Balducci could make another column, and Mr. Balducci responded that he is stretched out to the max to get all this information on the report. Mr. Stycos felt that Mr. Balducci could fit another column or make the page wider. He could have 2006-2007 administration estimated adjusted budget. Mr. Stycos felt that Mr. Traficante and Mr. Lombardi made some good points. He thought it best to pull this amendment and look at the City Charter to mirror that language with a re-write.

Mr. Balducci suggested November for a revision rather than April. This would allow him and administration to align the salary accounts based on the jamboree and April again. He may have to add one more which he refers to as his clean-up revision at the end of

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the fiscal year after all the bills have been paid to get the accounts ready for audit purposes. The clean-up revision is usually in July. He leaves June open for at least three weeks going into July. Mr. Stycos asked how the city handles it at year end, and Mr. Traficante responded that in many cases with the police and fire departments with overtime pay they would overspend in many cases. There wouldn't be enough money in those accounts, and they would deficit spend. In the fourth quarter, they would transfer funds from other

departments to make up that deficit. Mr. Traficante stated that in some cases it was very difficult to live for three quarters within a particular budget. As an example, in the snow removal budget, one year there were eighteen snow storms which cost over \$1 million; and they had budgeted only \$200,000. They had to go into the reserve account to pay for the deficit that they incurred in that particular budget. Then they made the adjustments at the end of the year to transfer monies from other accounts to make up and reimburse the reserve account.

Mr. Stycos withdrew his motion; Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway withdrew her second.

Mr. Stycos moved to amend the budget. He stated that the purpose of this amendment is to restore the library secretaries in the elementary schools. The cost of that is \$59,425 on page 160 of the budget. He stated that last night the committee approved a salary increase for the CAMS group that was less than budgeted, and it was less by \$18,000. That means carrying forward \$18,876. Because it is less than budgeted this year, it will be less than budgeted next year. That is \$18,876 which is due to this reduced agreement from last night.

Mr. Traficante clarified that the \$18,876 is in the current year's budget. The library secretaries' cuts come in the following budgetary year. He asked how this would be addressed. Mr. Balducci's asked Mr.



**Stycos if he was asking for those funds to be set aside from this year to next year to then help pay for the library aides, and his answer was no. Mr. Stycos commented that if he makes \$10 this year and he is raised up to \$11 this year, next year he will be making \$11. Since the committee cut from \$11 to \$10, they are saving \$1 this year, but next year they also save \$1 out of what is budgeted. There is also in next year's budget \$16,470 for raises for the CAMS group. That is the second piece that he is proposing. If this passed, it would mean that the CAMS salaries next year would be the same as they are this year after what was passed last night. The administration performance account which is the account for the top administrators in the district is \$18,629. There are three pieces there which total slightly less than the budgeted amount for library secretaries. He would be funding the library secretaries at slightly less than they are this year. He would make these three changes and restore the library secretaries at the amount those three numbers add up to.**

**Ms. Iannazzi seconded the motion.**

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**Mr. Stycos commented that everyone has heard the arguments about the library secretaries. This is basically a cheap way to do the work for the librarians so that they can do more important things with the students.**

**Mr. Lombardi asked Attorney Cascione if this had any effect on the committee's need to go back into Executive Session. Mr. Cascione responded that based on their previous discussions this evening, the committee should err on the side of caution. If the committee is going to touch upon that, they should go back into Executive Session.**

**Mr. Votto stated that he had a recollection that the secretarial contract that the committee currently has stipulates that they cannot have secretaries who are members of that bargaining unit on layoff and then bring back these non-union secretaries. In essence, if the committee brings back these secretaries, he believed that the committee would have to bring back the others first. He was not 100% positive about this, but it is what he recalled. These are part-time workers who are non-union. Mr. Traficante added that he thought Mr. Votto was correct. Mr. Stycos asked if this was a one-year side agreement. Mr. Votto responded that the union during negotiations did try to bring the part-time secretaries into the contract, but that did not occur. He was pretty sure that there is a provision in the contract that they can't have union secretaries on layoff and recall non-union secretaries. Mr. Lombardi stated that the committee was dangerously going into two reasons why they should be in Executive Session on this issue if they continue in this line of discussion. Attorney Cascione agreed with Mr. Lombardi.**

It was moved by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that the members adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Laws PL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel and PL 42-46-5(a)(2) contract and litigation.

The members adjourned to Executive Session at 7:45 p.m.

Chairman Traficante reconvened public session at 8:05 p.m.

Mr. Stycos withdrew his motion; Ms. Iannazzi withdrew her second to the motion.

Mr. Stycos moved to re-assign 1.5 FTE elementary school teacher positions from the elementary schools to the high schools. He wished to assign as equally as possible to the high schools, and he would like the administration to tell the committee what subject they would recommend they go toward.

Ms. Iannazzi seconded the motion.

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Mr. Scherza responded that he couldn't tell the committee at this moment. He would have to speak with administration at the high schools to see where they are right now with scheduling.

Mr. Archetto suggested appointing a full-time position and a .5 position to each high school rather than dividing it to .75 position.

Mr. Nero responded that if this amendment were to pass, they would have to appoint equal increment FTE's at the high school level such as .2, .4, .6, .8.

**Mr. Stycos suggested re-assigning one .4 FTE to the two high schools and would ask administration to recommend the subjects and the division of that one .4 FTE so as to have the maximum impact on class size.**

**This Amendment was adopted with Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lombardi, and Mr. Stycos, and Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway in favor; Mr. Archetto and Mr. Traficante opposed.**

**Mr. Stycos indicated that he wished to go back to those elements under discussion before going into Executive Session.**

**Mr. Stycos moved that the \$18,000 reduction in CAMS salary and expenses based on the agreement reached yesterday; the \$16,000 which would be accomplished by freezing CAMS salaries in the upcoming year; \$18,000 by eliminating the administrative performance account for a total of \$53,000; and \$41,000 in savings from the elimination of the switchboard position for a total of \$96,000.**

**That \$96,000 be re-allocated to higher additional teachers at the high schools and that the administration recommends the subjects for those teachers to be re-hired and that the division between the two high schools to have the maximum impact on class size.**

**Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway seconded the motion.**

**This Amendment failed with Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lombardi, and Mr. Traficante opposed; Mr. Archetto, Mr. Stycos, and Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway in favor.**

**Mr. Stycos moved to increase revenue by an estimated \$36,000 a year from charging a \$30.00 a month parking fee for students at both high schools. That would provide an estimated \$36,000, and that funding**

go to higher the equivalent of a half-time teacher at the high schools. Again, this is subject to recommendations by administration and for the maximum impact on class sizes.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway seconded the motion.

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Mrs. Greifer stated that as much as she would like to have more teachers at the high school level, she can't support something that she believes will be found to be illegal since there are previous court cases that state that the students, particularly Cranston East, have a right to park there. Since no one else is being charged to park there, she was not sure they could get away with just charging the students. She doesn't want to have any legal fees to find that out.

Mr. Stycos remarked that this court case went to the Supreme Court. There is a myth in this City about this case. The myth is that the court ordered that students had to have parking spaces behind Cranston East. The City Council authorized the police chief to come up with a plan for parking in that area. The police chief came up with a plan, and his plan banned student parking, and then he believed it was a policeman who sued on behalf of his daughter who was going to Cranston East saying that she was unfairly denied a parking space. The court ruled that what had been done was illegal, but the reason it

was illegal was that the City Council had improperly delegated to the administration a legislative function. It was a separation of powers argument, and so because it had been done in illegal manner, it had to be reversed. There is nothing that says that the School Committee can't legally through a legal process initiate a parking fee. The committee has to look at where their priorities are, and he also felt that when the committee goes asking for more money from the City Council and the legislature, it helps to say that the committee is doing their part. They are taking some punches and have established a parking fee instead of just saying to the other bodies, give us more money – we need it.

Mrs. Greifer stated that she found it difficult to believe that if the committee starts charging students \$30.00 to park behind City Hall and doesn't charge those people working in Briggs or City Hall, that somebody isn't going to raise the legal issue. It is going to cost money to fight that.

Mr. Lombardi stated that philosophically he had a problem trying to resolve the committee's woes by burdening the students at the two high schools. The original reason the committee went into Executive Session is the fact that the School Committee is trying to do the best job they can. One of the avenues they are considering is one of litigation. He is fearful of going down this path of piece meal attempts to cut the budget by \$36,000 or \$40,000 if, in fact, it may have a bigger effect upon the committee's strategy visa vi the \$3.5

million deficit they are facing. Philosophically he has a problem, and being one of the three lawyers on the committee, he wanted to go into Executive Session in the first place so as not to jeopardize their standing in that position. He indicated that he would stand against this amendment as well.

Mr. Traficante commented that he would venture to guess that the students would do everything humanly possible to avoid paying for parking and would seek other areas to park their vehicles other than an area where they would have to pay for parking.

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This Amendment failed with Mr. Archetto, Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lombardi, and Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway opposed; Mr. Stycos was in favor.

Mr. Traficante stated that upon advice of counsel, he advised the public that the committee took no vote in Executive Session.

Mr. Traficante recused himself from the following conversation. He indicated that he had invited Dr. Michael Silvia as the Executive Director of the Charter School to respond to any questions or clarifications Mr. Stycos may have regarding any points of concern.

Mr. Stycos referred to information he had distributed to the

committee at the June 18th School Committee meeting. He noted that the top page was the tuition the school district pays under state law in the budget, \$747,225 is projected for 135 students. The next pages refer to the class sizes from administration. The average class size at the Charter School is about fifteen. The next series of pages is an analysis that Mr. Balducci did a couple of years ago on the various financial contributions of the school department and the New England Laborers' Union. He pointed out that in addition to having an average class size of fifteen, the classes also have a technical instructor supplied and paid by the New England Laborers' Union. Those instructors, as of one year ago, were being paid \$74,620 a year plus a \$36,000 benefit package. That is a \$110,000 cost per aide. Given this situation with this school, he thought the school department is subsidizing the Charter School. On the last page, he put together an estimate of what this subsidy is. That subsidy includes some of the items from Mr. Balducci's memo. He took out the special education costs which are mandated, took out the transportation which was mandated from his estimates, took out the insurance which he felt was underestimated. That gave him a total of \$39,000. Because these figures that Mr. Balducci had were from fiscal year 2006 and the committee is now talking about fiscal year 2008, he added 9% to that for a two-year budget increase. That is what the school budget has gone up in the last two years combined. Then he took out of the school department's budget a series of items, rubbish collection, stockroom, labor relations, various insurances from Workers Comp to property, snow removal, audit, energy



efficiency, employee assistance, and came up with a total. Then he figured what percentage of the Charter School budget was of the entire school department budget; took that percentage of the \$1.6 million and added in an estimated \$1,200 that the school department spends every year to bus every 8th grader to tour the Charter School and the estimated benefit that the Charter School has of sending children to the Cranston East sports programs which they don't contribute to financially. He came up with a total share for the Charter School of \$77,000.

Mr. Stycos moved to amend the budget to have the Charter School in the next fiscal year pay the school department \$77,505 for the things that the school department subsidizes them for, and it would use that money to fund a full-time teacher in the high schools.

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Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway seconded the motion.

Mr. Archetto stated to Mr. Stycos that he was causing a hurt or an adverse affect on one educational institution to help another institution. Earlier there was a vote the committee took on the 1.5 positions to subtract that from the elementary level and put it at the high school level. He voted no because his concern is Gladstone and Woodridge Schools. He knows that there are problems at Woodridge and Gladstone. Here he is effecting a premier Charter School that

has worked wonders. He has toured that school. There are students who attend the Charter School who really wouldn't do well at Cranston East or Cranston West. He stated that he could not support this amendment. He was hurting one institution to help another.

Mr. Lombardi referred to a memo written by Mr. Nero concerning the Charter School class sizes. In that memo Mr. Nero stated, "Please note that, by charter, the ratio of teacher to students is supposed to be 1:12. Mr. Lombardi referred to a line item in the amount of \$289,307 and asked Mr. Balducci what this represented. In response, Mr. Balducci indicated that he had written a memo to former Superintendent Catherine Ciarlo that outlined both the in-kind contributions that came from the Labors International Union and also Cranston Public Schools to the Charter School. There is a summary of items from Cranston Public Schools for in-kind contributions. The total of \$289,307 is the amount Mr. Stycos is referring to. The detail page is behind the summary page that shows how it was calculated. Mr. Lombardi asked if this suggested that the numbers after 07/08 the costs are not included in the Balducci memo. Mr. Balducci responded that those are projected numbers that are budgeted for Cranston Public Schools. Mr. Stycos was saying that a piece of that should be borne by the Charter School. Mr. Balducci clarified that with regard to the administrative insurance property, the figure on the top of \$378 is one of the in-kind contributions that Cranston Public Schools makes to the Charter School. \$378 was the amount he received from his insurance company which is the value of insuring

the contents of the building that Cranston Public Schools is responsible for because they are the tenants of the building. The Charter School budget pays for insurance of the building itself so they have a separate policy with an insurance company. When that bills come in, it is paid for by the Charter School budget not as part of Cranston Public Schools insurance policy with the Interlocal Trust. It is a whole separate policy. Putting that whole amount of money in the equation is inappropriate; it needs to be backed out. One of the other adjustments on the Workers Compensation, the school department is charged by Beacon Insurance a certain rate based on the type of position whether it is professional, clerical, or custodial position. A more appropriate analysis would be taking the number of teachers, the number of secretaries, and the number of custodians and multiplying it by the rate that the school district is being charged by Beacon and then apply that amount versus taking the whole Workers Compensation premium and using it as part of the equation. With regard to the fiscal audit in the amount of \$15,000, in Mr. Balducci's analysis that he did for the in-kind contributions that the school district provides to the

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Charter School, that is part of what his office spends in preparing for the audit for the Charter School. The auditors spend approximately one hour looking at the trial balance that his office prepares for the Charter School, tie in the numbers, and then leave it alone. To assign

**the whole piece of \$15,000 to the Charter School is inappropriate.**

**Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway stated that it is a worthy discussion when the committee looks at any of the programs that they are involved with in Cranston. He thanked Mr. Stycos for bringing something out for open discussion. However, she felt uncomfortable right now because some of the things she would like to say touch on some matters that were mentioned in Executive Session yesterday. For that reason, she felt she could not comment on some of the issues because some things were addressed in Executive Session yesterday. Without being mysterious but with trying to be proper, she would like to discuss this issue more fully; but it should be addressed in Executive Session. The matter itself is worthy of paying attention to it, but she didn't feel comfortable doing it here.**

**Mr. Scherza stated that it was not his place to try to sway the committee's discussion either way. He wished to dispel any myths or misunderstandings. The class size at the Charter School is approved by the Rhode Island Department of Education by Charter. This can be found in the documentation that those class sizes are actually dictated. He believed that they were over the class size that is dictated by Charter. To his knowledge, buses for New England Laborers Academy, whether they be for field trips or anything else, are paid for by the Laborers. He always checks on this to make sure the district is being subsidized. There are also services being provided back to the Cranston Public Schools through the AEP**

**Program. There are programs the Charter School has and some services that AEP doesn't. The students at AEP in order to get those are afforded the opportunity through the Charter School without actual dollars changing hands. That helps the district, and there is an in-kind contribution back. If they were to negatively impact the working agreement with the Charter School, he would worry that they were going to negatively impact their ability to function well. If those students were back at East or West, and that is in excess of 100 students, that would be big dollars for services when one looks at the type of students who are often there. It would also negatively impact the class size by adding another 100 students back into a population that was referred to tonight as already being over-populated.**

**Mr. Lombardi echoed Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway's earlier comments. Without beating a dead horse, the committee is in a certain posture from a budgetary standpoint, and he is fearful that anything and everything the committee does may jeopardize their position ultimately. For that reason again, he is standing against this amendment as well.**

**Ms. Iannazzi echoed Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway's and Mr. Lombardi's comments as well.**

Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Balducci if the \$378 that he had in his analysis was administrative property insurance, and Mr. Balducci responded that they are what he calls contents. A piece of the amount of money the district spends for the Interlocal Trust for insurance, he asked the Interlocal Trust of the value of the contents of the Charter School which shows up on an asset listing provided by the Trust, of the premium how much is that \$1.6 million worth as far as the district's premium is concerned. Mr. Stycos commented to Mr. Balducci that the item on the sheet indicating administrative property insurance, \$377,000, that insurance covers the building and the contents. Mr. Balducci responded that only \$378 of that \$377,000 is the piece that belongs to the Charter School. It is the contents, not the building. The building is being insured by a separate insurance company, and the Charter School gets the bill from that insurance company. The Charter School gets the bill from the insurance, and they pay for it and budget for it out of their budget. Mr. Stycos stated that this is a more accurate measure than his method on that item. He agreed with Mr. Balducci on the Workers Compensation calculation also. When he looks at the Charter School budget, he doesn't see any item in that budget under expenditures for any type of insurance. Mr. Balducci responded that it is under the category purchased services because that money is spent to an external agency. It is part of the \$20,000 that is budgeted for purchased services.

Mr. Stycos referred to Mr. Archetto's earlier comment regarding its

one school against another, and he felt that the committee was looking at an equity issue. He didn't think as a committee they would stand for one elementary school having class sizes of fifteen and another elementary school having class sizes of thirty. The committee would say that was unfair and had to be rectified. That is what is going on with the Charter School. They are able to have these small class sizes in part because the school district subsidizes their operation. If the committee decided it wanted to put more money into Gladstone, they could lower class sizes there; but the consequence would be that they would go up somewhere else. There is an equity issue as far as he could see it. The second argument is with the Superintendent about the state Charter requires a certain class size at the Charter School. He doesn't question that, but that is not the committee's problem. The district doesn't do that with any other charter school. There aren't other charter schools who come to the School Committee and state that they have a budget problem and are supposed to have small class sizes and ask for money to correct it. That is really the Charter School's problem and not the School Committee's problem. With reference to the busing, when the school district takes every 8th grader in Cranston on a tour of the Charter School, he asked who pays for the buses. Dr. Silvia responded that the Charter School pays for it. Mr. Stycos asked where it shows up in the Charter School budget, and Mr. Balducci stated that it appears under field trips - \$3,500. Mr. Stycos requested a purchase order as to how that would be handled. He asked if there was a confirmation of that. He thought he was told the opposite another year. Dr. Silvia

stated that he signs purchase orders and submits them to Joel Zisseron. Mr. Stycos again requested a copy of a purchase order.

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Mrs. Greifer mentioned that when Mr. Stycos talks about comparing things that the district does for the Cranston Public Schools' New England Laborers' Construction Career Academy that is because it is a partnership which they do not have with other charter schools throughout the state. This Charter School was granted a charter by the state and is a partnership, and one of the facts that is in the packet that Mr. Stycos distributed last evening that he failed to mention publicly, when he talks about the district subsidizing the Charter School as if it were a separate entity, the New England Laborers contribute \$605,000 to subsidize this school. Talking about equity with other charter schools, it is apples and oranges.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway stated that she had a problem with this discussion because she didn't feel that she can respond meaningfully to Mrs. Greifer without going into what the committee discussed in Executive Session yesterday. In order to have a full discussion on this subject, perhaps it should be done in Executive Session if not tonight at another time.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway moved to discuss this in Executive Session



**now or at a later date.**

**There was no second to the motion.**

**There could be no more discussion on Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway's motion since there was a motion on the floor.**

**Mr. Archetto moved to move the question.**

**This Amendment failed with Mr. Archetto, Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, and Mr. Lombardi, and Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway opposed; Mr. Stycos in favor; and Mr. Traficante recused.**

**Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway moved to put the discussion of the questions raised by Mr. Stycos and the question of reimbursement, subsidies, costs, and expenses on the next available work session for Executive Session.**

**Mr. Traficante commented to Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway that it wasn't necessary to make a motion to have a certain item placed on the Executive Session for the work session.**

**This Resolution as amended was adopted unanimously.**

**Moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that the members adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RI**

**State Laws 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel and 42-46-5(a)(2) Contract and Litigation (possible litigation).**

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**Mr. Traficante reconvened public session at 9:03 p.m.**

**Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that the June 19, 2007 Executive Session minutes remain confidential.**

#### **VIII. New Business**

**There was no new business to come before the committee.**

#### **IX. Public Hearing on Non-agenda Items**

**There were no speakers on non-agenda items.**

#### **X. Announcement of Future Meetings**

**The next meeting is a work session to be held on Wednesday, July 11th, in the Briggs Building at 6:00 p.m.**

#### **XI. Adjournment**

**Moved by Mr. Archetto, seconded by Ms. Greifer and unanimously carried that the meeting be adjourned.**

**There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was adjourned at  
9:05 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Andrea M. Iannazzi  
Clerk**